

FRIEND REQUEST

“How to Be the Friend You’ve Always Wanted!”

Show me your friends, and I will show you your future.

Your human tendencies are not your friend when it comes to being a GREAT friend.

Human Tendency #1: To believe the best about me – the worst about you.

Sociologists call this: Fundamental Attribution Error.

“Human beings tend to blame others’ mistakes on personal character/behavioral flaws while we blame our own mistakes on purely environmental conditions.”

- Patrick Lencioni



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“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.” Matthew 7:12 (NLT)

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.” Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you.” But Jesus said, “Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

Luke

Jesus’ Tendency: To believe the best about you, even though He knows you better than you know your self.

Human Tendency #2: To evaluate relationships based on what's in it for me.

“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:25-28 (NIV)

Jesus' Tendency: To enable other's God-given potential by servicing them, not using them.

Human Tendency #3: To be too pushy or too passive when it comes to our faith.

“The other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

John 20:25-27 (NIV)

Jesus' Tendency: To offer the delicate balance between spiritual invitation and challenge that only those who know us best can give.

“There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends... Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you.”

John

15:13-16 (NLT)

“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.”

2 Peter

Leadership Tip!

Even leaders need help improving relationships! If you feel your friendships are not what they should be, realize you might be the weak link in the relationship. Prayer and reflection can help point out areas that need improvement, but a trusted friend will tell you what you need to hear versus what you want to believe.

FRIEND REQUEST - “Always Wanted”**STARTER QUESTION:**

What is the hardest part about evaluating a relationship?

MAIN IDEA:

We have learned that we were created for and to be part of relationships. This week we talked about our part in a relationship, how to be that friend you always wanted to be.

Matthew 7:12 (NLT)

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.”

Pastor Hank talked about how our own tendencies can keep us from being a great friend.

1. To believe the best about me – the worst about you.
2. To evaluate relationships based on what’s in it for me.
3. To be too pushy or too passive when it comes to our faith.

Which one of these do you think is the most challenging for you and why?

Could one (or all) of these tendencies compound the effect of another tendency?

Do you think it is fair to use Jesus as an example of a great friend? Why?

Romans 8:29-30 (MSG)

“God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.”

God always intended for us to be a great friend and to have great friends. He sent His Son to lead us by His example in friendship by:

1. Believing the best in someone.
2. Serving others.
3. Offering a balance between spiritual invitation and spiritual challenge in friendships.

What would be a good example of a spiritual invitation and challenge?

Would inviting someone to the upcoming James Study be a good example?

How would you go about inviting someone new to your Life Group?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Being a great friend starts with having the greatest friend you could have, Jesus.

John 15:13-16 (NLT)

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends... Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn’t choose me. I chose you.”

Without Jesus in our friendships, we are doomed to repeat the failing of our human tendencies which will keep our relationships from being all that God intended them to be. If you feel that something is missing in your relationships, I challenge you to go back over the book of John in the New Testament. Find out how Jesus interacted with His friends and other people and when you do, read it with the idea that what you are reading is from one of Jesus’ closest friends. See if that gives you a new perspective on your relationships and how to improve them.

FAMILY FOCUS:

Use a crumpled piece of paper to teach about treating other people with respect, not to bully and just plain treat each other right. Give each child a perfectly crisp piece of paper. Then tell them to crumple it up into a ball. Encourage them to crumple it, stomp on it, sit on it, throw it across the room, and mash it up. Go ahead, be mean to it!

Next, ask them to smooth it out. Show them how to smooth it out on a table, tightly pulling it along the edge. Try as many techniques as you can to try and smooth it out.

Then have a conversation like this: Ask them, “Is it fixed? Is it like it was when I first gave it to you?” Nope, not even close.

“Ok, now say you’re sorry.”

“Did that make it better?”

“No.” Of course not, it didn’t fix anything.

“How about if you say it like you really really mean it?”

Nope, the paper will still be a horribly marred mess.

“What did make it better?”

Smoothing it out did make it better than a crumpled up ball. So action, doing something, did help.

“Is the paper like it was before you crumpled it up into a ball?”

No. It’s scarred. It will never be the same.

“So what can we do to keep from scarring the paper?”

Aah, don’t crumple it up in the first place.

The same goes for our relationships with others. If you are mean to someone, say something bad, call them a name, even hurt them physically, it’s like crumpling them up into a ball. You can apologize but that doesn’t fix what you did. You can pick them up, give them a hug, do whatever you can to make them feel better and that might really help. But there will still be scars. When they see you, they’ll be reminded of how you treated them before.